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ABSTRACT

A teaching master at a community college in Central Ontario implemented a practicum designed to increase the rate of child-directed activities in early childhood education programs. The primary goal was to increase awareness of early childhood educators, parents, and board members regarding the benefits of child-directed activities at early childhood education centers. Practicum goals were attained by collecting time-tables and by conducting interviews with supervisors and staff and informal observations of six participant centers. The percentage of child-directed activities in each program was jointly agreed on by the writer and the staff. A 6-week course was developed to enhance early childhood educators' skill in providing an increased number of child-directed activities. Follow-up activities included two parent and board of directors workshops, staff in-service sessions, on-site support in practicum settings, and writer assistance to anyone who requested it. Practicum evaluation data indicated an increased awareness of the benefits of child-directed activities for young children and an increase in the percentage of child-directed activities at participating sites. Related materials are provided in 10 appendices, including a course outline, rating scales, and questionnaires. (RH)

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Strategies To Increase the Rate of Child-Directed Activities within the Early Childhood Education Community

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Strategies To Increase The Rate Of Child-Directed Activities Within The Early Childhood Education Community

by

Ingrid C. Crowther

Cluster 28

A Practicum I Report presented to the
Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood
in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1989

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PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Ray Michol

Chairman of Community Studies

Loyalist College

Belleville, Ontario

June 23, 1989

This practicum report was submitted by Ingrid C. Crowther under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

7 20 89

Date of Final Approval of Report

Marilyn Segal, Ph.D.

Dr. Marilyn Segal, Ph.D., Advisor

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Ingrid Crowther

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ABSTRACT

Strategies To Increase the Rate of Child-Directed Activities Within The Early Childhood Education Community. Crowther, Ingrid C., 1989: Practicum Report, Nova University, Ed.D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood. Descriptors: Behaviour Change/Preschool Education/Play/Learning Experience/Inservice Education/Early Childhood Education/Adult Learning/Teacher Education

This practicum was designed to increase the rate of child-directed activities within early childhood programs. The primary goal was to increase the awareness of early childhood educators, parents and members of boards of directors to the benefits of more child-directed activities within early childhood education centers. It was hoped that this would lead to more child-directed activities in an increasing number of early childhood education programs within this community.

The writer collected time-tables, conducted interviews with supervisors and staff and conducted some informal observations of six participant centres. The percentage of child-directed activities within each program was jointly agreed upon by the writer and the staff. A six week course, was developed to enhance the early childhood educators' skill in providing more child-directed activities. Follow-up activities included two parent and board of directors' workshops, staff in-service sessions, on-site support within individual practicum settings and availability of the writer to give assistance to individuals who requested it.

The results of this practicum were very positive. Analysis of the data showed an increased awareness of the benefits of child-directed activities for young children and also showed a corresponding increase in the percentage of child-directed activities within participating practicum locations.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Work Setting and Community

The writer was employed as a teaching master, in early childhood education at a community college in a small city in Central Ontario. Within a radius of fifty miles, the college serviced a population of 148,365. The majority of the ethnic population was of British origin with a small percentage of French and other origins. Major sources of income within this area stemmed from some major manufacturing industries and from tourism. However, the majority of the families were within the low income salary ranges. A low percentage of families were within the high salary range.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

As part of their teaching assignment, the faculty was required to supervise and evaluate student teachers within their practicum settings. These practicum settings ranged from full-day services to half-day services for young children. Opportunities existed for specialized practicum experiences for student teachers. These might have been in integrated settings for exceptional children or in a practicum experience which gave students opportunities to visit private home day care givers and also to plan and implement relevant workshops for this group.

Additionally, students could be placed within the Junior or Senior Kindergarten programs. These were also considered specialized placements.

As part of their training, early childhood education students were required to have four different practicum experiences within their two-year program and only one of these could be considered as a specialized placement. The college utilized fifteen practicum locations within the community. The community included two small urban centers and a number of rural locations.

More detailed information about individual practicum locations is found in Tables 1 to 4. These are summaries of information of a questionnaire, see Figure 1, which was completed by participating practitioners. Practicum locations were classified as day care, half-day nursery schools, elementary schools, private home day care, resource centers and drop in centers. Table 1, is a summary of the first five categories of the questionnaire. Table 2, summarizes the next four categories. Table 3, summarizes information describing the organization of the different centers and Table 4, summarizes information about the philosophies of the participating centers.

Socio-economic considerations were not applicable to most centers. Only two centers offered subsidized spaces, and thus required a financial assessment on parent income.

Practicum Questionnaire

Please answer the questions carefully, or circle the appropriate responses.

What kind of center is it?

1. Non-profit day care
2. Profit day care
3. College lab school
4. Nursery school
5. Drop-in center
6. Parent cooperative
7. Other

What kind of children and families do you service?
Number of children licensed for?
The type of handicapped services you are prepared to provide for
Actual number and type of handicapped children enrolled
Special policies with respect to admission
The geographical area your center services
Socio-economic considerations -language
-religion
-ethnic
-other

Briefly describe the organization of your center.

1. Volunteer board - Number of members
-Type of membership
- Number of years each member serves
2. Staff - title, educational background and number of years of experience
3. Salaries- Do you consider salaries of the staff
High Medium Low for this area?

Philosophy of center

1. Teacher-directed
2. Child-directed/child-initiated
3. Combination - indicate types of activities you consider teacher-directed or child-directed. Also indicate approximate amount of time spent in each
4. Parent involvement - indicate type of involvement and approximate amount of time spent
5. Give a brief description of your physical setting
6. Indicate briefly why you are interested in participating in this particular project

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Figure 1

Table 1

Comparison of Enrollment of Different Centers				
Type of Center	Types of Families Serviced	Age Range	Number Licensed	Actual Enrollment
day care	-native children -low income, single parents -professional parents	2-6	24-64	17-65
nursery	-single parents -professional parents -low income	2.4-8	16	45-155 per week
elementary school	-range of socio-economic status, educational levels and marital status	4-7	n/a	12-25
private home day care	-professional families -well educated	18 mos to 6	22-24	20-24
resource center	-professional families -well educated -interested in giving head-start to their children	infant to 5	n/a	varies on day to day
drop-in	-parents returning to school to complete high school	3 mos to 5	8-16	8-16

Table 2

Comparison of Admission Policies of Different Centers		
Type of Center	Handicapped Services and Enrollment	Admission Policies and Geographic Area
day care	-two centers offer services for developmentally delayed children with resource teacher help -two centers offer services for hearing impaired and language delays -no services for any physically handicapped -special populations down syndrome, hearing impaired language impaired	-children must be toilet trained -parents must provide own transportation -3 centers require residency within city area, other centers have no geographic area restrictions -one center requires parental help with fund raising -one center requires Indian status for admission -one center provides bus services for children
nursery	-only one center offers services to all types of handicaps and has a variety of handicapped children enrolled	-except for one center all centers require parents to provide transportation, children to be toilet trained -no restrictions on geographic area
elementary schools	-all types of handicaps with resource help -speech and language problems, spina bifida, hyperactivity and asthmatic	-must be 4 or 5 years old before or on Dec. 31 -must live within county -usually must enroll within school area, unless enrollment of school is low
private home day care resource centers drop-in centers	-no special services provided -no handicapped children enrolled	-no special admission requirements -no geographic area requirements -parents provide own transportation

Table 3

Comparison of Organization of Different Centers			
Type of Center	Type of Board and Board Structure	Staff Experience Qualifications	Salary Range
day care nursery resource center drop-in center	-mostly volunteer boards of 4-9 members serving from 2 to an indefinite no. of years -one center is operated by an Indian band -one center is operated by a Social Services Committee with membership appointed by County Council	-experience range from 0-16 years -most employees have ECE qualifications -two employees have some ECE courses, both employed at same center -one untrained	-4 centers low range -majority medium range -4 centers high range
private home day care	-privately owned and operated	-all employees with ECE qualifications -one with B.A. in child studies -one with B.A. + ECE -experience from 2-12 years	-medium range
elementary school	school board	-teacher assistants have teacher certificate or ECE diploma -adult supervisors have some ECE courses -experience 8-12 years -teachers all have B.A. and teacher certification -experience 20-22 years	-teacher assistants and adult supervisors are in low range -teachers high (twice as much as high range in previous categories)

Table 4

Comparison of Philosophy of Different Centers				
Type of Center	Teaching Approach	Parental Involvement	Physical Setting	Reason for Participation
day care nursery private home day care drop-in center resource center	-centers indicate combination of child-directed teacher-directed activities -20% - 80% teacher-directed activities reported	-encouraged to help on special occasions, field trips -informal conversation at drop-off/pick-up time -parent information boards -parent evenings, average of 2 a year -one center sends home monthly calendars -two centers encourage parents to drop in any time -making of play equipment -resource center encourages parents to participate during children's activities	-4 centers with two floors -4 centers with one room only -all have indoor/outdoor facilities -set up varies from use of rooms by purpose or age and by setting up of interest centers -nursery locations have access to outdoor play areas and some have separate indoor gym areas	-new trend -aid integration into kindergarten -ready for a change as a staff -gain more information about new approaches to learning -gain new ideas/insight to enhance program -develop new teaching strategies -help in the gradual transition toward more child-directed programming -learning to set up more child-directed environments -staff training -gain hands-on experiences
elementary	-4 year old child-directed -5 & up, increased teacher-directed activities	-volunteers help in daily routines -interviews -field trips -open door	-one large room -interest centres & formally structured classroom set-ups	-change of philosophy in teaching -lack experience with child-directed activities

CHAPTER II

THE STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The emphasis of the academic program at the college centered around child-directed/child-initiated activities. However, the model that was perpetuated within the community centered around teacher-directed activities. All centers used for the students' practicum experiences, with the exception of the Junior Kindergarten placements, ranged from 40 to 90% teacher directed activities. Junior Kindergarten programs used the child-directed/child-initiated approach to learning. Only four such sites were being used. Thus, the early childhood education student had very little opportunity to become involved in a practicum experience that more closely related to the theoretical model taught in the two year academic program. Therefore, the problem identified was to modify the teaching strategies within the centers of the early childhood community in this area, so that a greater proportion of the day might be devoted to child-directed activities.

Problem Documentation

In order to establish that the problem actually existed, time-tables of the children's daily activities within six community centers, were collected and

interviews with practicum staff and supervisors were conducted. Additionally faculty observations were taken into account.

Data was analyzed in the following manner. Each daily activity was assessed and agreed upon as either child-directed or teacher-directed by both faculty and staff. The percentage of teacher-directed activity was found in the following manner.

$$\frac{\text{Total no. of teacher-directed activities}}{\text{Total no. of hours of operation.}} \times 100$$

Results

Program	% of Teacher-Directed Activities
1	70
2	70
3	60
4	50
5	50
6	60

Causative Analysis

The particular geographic area that this community college serviced, was relatively isolated from larger urban centers. Subsequently, there had been little public awareness or education about the long term effects of inappropriate educational practices for young children and conversely, the benefits of more appropriate practices. With the advent of the establishment of junior kindergartens within the public and separate boards of

educations within the area, more emphasis was placed on developmentally appropriate practices for young children within educational settings. The philosophy of the junior kindergarten programs as dictated by the Ministry of Education emphasized child-directed programs. Awareness was raised within educational settings, but little had been done to raise public awareness. Neither had adequate funding been made available to support the philosophy of more child-directed programs within the early childhood community.

The educational system that potential early childhood educators were drawn from, was a very formal teacher-directed system. Individuals who had been educated within this kind of a model found it very difficult to adapt to a new model, especially since the models the students used for their practical training were also mostly teacher-directed. It would seem, therefore, that an inappropriate model was perpetuated.

Further, it had also become evident that perhaps teacher training needed to be revised. In a recent study by the author, it became evident that the teaching style used within the college needed to be revised. Findings suggested that although students were able to use some formal operational reasoning, i.e. make logical deductions, formulate a hypothesis and support that hypothesis, much more concrete operational reasoning was

used. Subject matter needed to be presented in a very repetitive, concrete manner. Student thinking was more concerned with the parts of an issue rather than the relationship among those parts. Reasoning style was in terms of opposites. Students found it difficult to relate to two or more events at one time. It was evident that the students did relate to and conform to rules within their particular settings, but there was strong evidence that the students' beliefs and actions were closely tied to those standards set by family and friends.

If potential graduates were to implement more child-directed programs in the future, it became evident that students must assimilate some of the necessary skills within their teacher training program. It was further evident, that the student actually lacked some of the critical skills necessary for the establishment of more child-directed programs. Thus, the slant and emphasis of training needed to be more closely looked at, if future changes within the early childhood education field were to be expected.

The field of early childhood education in this area had a few additional problems. One of these was an extremely low rate of pay, in many cases just above minimum wage. A second problem was the lack of opportunity for upward mobility. Hence, little incentive existed, for practitioners already tired from a long day at work, to research ways and means to change the existing

structure of their centers.

Further, most programs operated as non-profit centers. These centers operated under parent boards. These parent boards tended to lack stability, often changing either partially or totally every year. Recruitment for new board members was problematic. Subsequently, new board members may have had very little knowledge or experience about running a center or about developmentally appropriate practices. The teachers were left in a position of having very little support to draw upon and with the possibilities of conflicting demands made upon the curriculum of their programs.

Licensing policies for the operation of centers tended to be concerned with the physical appropriateness of the center, staffing ratios, qualification of staff, and health, safety and nutritional requirements of young children. Program quality or appropriate teaching practices were not addressed. Therefore, the practitioner could simply fulfil all the requirements as prescribed by legislation, but could well have been operating in very inappropriate ways in areas of curriculum development and interactions with the children.

It was also of interest to note that some of the impact of a precision teaching model taught in previous years at the college to early childhood education students was still very much in evidence in a variety of programs. These particular programs seemed quite firmly entrenched

within that particular philosophy.

In summary, it would seem that the community of early childhood educators within this area, lacked the resources both financial and professional to change, lacked appropriate models to strive towards, lacked a realistic awareness of the nature of more developmentally appropriate programs and had very little support or encouragement to change the status quo of their existing practices with young children. In such a climate it was very difficult for an individual to instigate change and for that individual to persist in his or her efforts.

Relationship of the Problem to Literature

Both the training programs of early childhood educators and early childhood education programs have tended to utilize existing models of education. Unfortunately, the most common model available was that of the elementary school system. Subsequently, the practices and materials of the school age system have been adopted within the curricula of early childhood programs without any consideration of the different learning styles of young children, Doremus (1986).

Elkind (1986), questions why the learning characteristics of young children have been so completely ignored when research has clearly shown the necessity of teaching young children in a more developmentally appropriate way, NAEYC Position Statement (1986). Reasons

for inappropriate teaching practices, may be classified under political, economic and social rationales, according to Elkind (1986).

All educational institutions are very much influenced by the political and economic clime of the societal structure they are a part of. Large numbers of students in individual classrooms is certainly a more economic way of educating children, if only the numerical cost factors are considered. Unfortunately, large class sizes also tend to lead to more teacher-directed programs. Teacher-directed activities have become identified as "good teaching" practices because it is easier to establish "control" over larger groups of children when all the individuals in that group are expected to behave in very similar ways. It is also easier and less expensive to set up an environment for large numbers of children within a limited space. Rows of desks accommodate more children, utilize less space and are more cost efficient than an environment rich in developmentally appropriate materials and equipment. Learning outcomes are much more easily measured, since learning outcomes are much more easily controlled. Thus, documenting and reporting changes in cognitive growth also becomes much easier.

If, however, a different cost factor is considered, the harm of inappropriate teaching practices to young children, the educational system becomes much less efficient. Elkind (1986), has identified both short-term

and long-term risks.

Young children who are forced into a formal teacher-directed mode of education too early, tend to show short-term risks that are stress related. Two types of stress are considered. Early symptoms of stress associated with excessive demands on the child's ability to adapt to the environment or the situation may result in loss of appetite, fatigue and a subsequent loss of efficiency. If these excessive demands continue, later symptoms of stress lead to psychosomatic symptoms such as headaches and stomach-aches.

Children may also exhibit long-term risks that are associated with motivation, intellectual and social factors. Children who are exposed to a curriculum that forces individuals to assume adult learning priorities will be less able to make their own decisions, less likely to solve problems that arise and will become much more dependent upon the adults around them. Thus children's own initiative may be curbed. According to Erikson, in these situations individuals may not develop the balance necessary between a sense of initiative and a sense of guilt and may thus be unprepared to move on to the next developmental level of industry versus inferiority successfully. These children lack faith in their own power to act and may develop an excessive sense of guilt over real and/or imaginary actions as new motor and cognitive capabilities develop.

Piaget's theory of cognitive development reinforces the child's need to become an active participant in his or her environment. It is only thus that children can form the mental representations necessary to be able to manipulate the many abstract concepts of later school years. Without these mental representations the child will not be able to accurately interpret and make sense of the world around him.

These children who have participated in and have graduated from a very teacher-directed school system, tend to be much more resistant to change. Teachers will continue to teach in a similar manner that they have been taught in. Parents will continue to expect the products of such a system. Administrators will continue to enforce a system that is neither to the benefit of the teachers within their system nor to the needs of their student population.

> The bureaucratic conception of teaching implies that administrators and specialists plan curriculum, and teachers implement a curriculum planned for them. Teachers' work is supervised by superiors whose job it is to make sure that teachers implement the curriculum and the

> procedures of the school district. In this bureaucratic conception, teachers do not plan or inspect their work; they merely perform it. (Darling-Hammond, 1986, pp. 532-533)

The impact of public opinion on child rearing practices is another factor. For example, children in the past have been treated like "miniature adults". To some degree we still accept these practices within the educational systems. It is appropriate to sit young children in front of the teacher at circle-time in the following manner. Children often sit on a mat, "Indian-style", feet crossed, hands in lap, back straight, with eye-contact and very quiet. Six-year-olds are expected to sit in their desks for the majority of the day, engaging in paper-and-pen activities. According to Doremus (1986), such practices clearly indicate a lack of understanding about young children's developmental levels and may indicate the adult's need to organize a "neater and more efficient classroom."

The influences of some learning theories have had a very negative impact on educational practices for young children. For example, behaviorists believe that ALL task can be successfully taught by breaking the task down into its component steps. Developmental levels or learning styles of the individuals are not a consideration at all. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that a very

inappropriate system is often in place for the education of the young child.

There is abundant research available that would seem to indicate that programs for young children should be more developmentally appropriate, NAEYC Position Statement (1986), Stone (1987), Doremus (1986) and Hymes (1986). Schweinhart (1987) states, that it is evident that there is agreement that early childhood programs should focus on child-directed/child-initiated activities. Kimes Myers and Maurer (1987), also strongly support this statement. In conclusion, the evidence as cited in the research seems to support the need for more child-directed programs and environments for young children.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

It was the intent of this project to:

1. Increase the awareness of the practitioners, parents and board of directors to the benefits of child-directed activities within educational settings to young children.
2. Increase the amount of child-directed activities within practicum locations.
3. Increase opportunities for early childhood education students to participate in practicum locations that offer a variety of child-directed/child-initiated activities.

Behavioural Objectives

The objectives were to:

1. provide a six week evening course to early childhood educators through the community college, see Appendix A. This course defines what child-directed/child-initiated activities are, offers opportunities to visit child-directed programs, explores the advantages of this technique both for the teacher and the child and helps practitioners to evaluate the degree of child-directed activities that occur within their settings. See Appendix B for a child-directed

rating scale.

2. provide an evening workshop to inform parents and board of directors about the value of play in the curriculum of their children.
3. involve community college faculty to include frequent visits to participating centers, to help set up appropriate activities, to answer questions and concerns, to help evaluate in the initial stages and to offer encouragement in general.
4. apply for a grant to Community and Social Services to
   a) defray the cost of the course for the practitioner.
   b) enhance professional status of early childhood educators within the area. See Appendix C, for the grant proposal application.

Measurement of Objectives

1. The six week evening course was evaluated by the participants in two ways. Students were asked to fill in a course evaluation questionnaire. Pertinent items on the questionnaire were chosen from the Instructor and Course Evaluation System Catalogue (1977). The advantage of using this particular format, assures the validity of the questionnaire, as all items within the catalogue have been previously validated, see Appendix D. Students were asked to complete the questionnaire during the last scheduled class. Time spent on the questionnaire did not exceed ten minutes.

2. Objective two was measured in a similar manner to the measurement strategies as outlined in number one. See Appendix E and F for the questionnaires for parent and board of director's workshops.
3. Participants were asked to fill in a second questionnaire, after a two month time lapse, to see how effective the implementation strategies for their practicum locations were, see Appendix G. This questionnaire contained open-ended questions to which the individuals were asked to respond in writing. It was anticipated that this exercise would not exceed thirty minutes. Questionnaires were to be mailed back to the college by the participants. A self addressed return envelope was included.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGIES

Discussion and Evaluation Solutions

Solution strategies were subdivided under the following headings, implementation strategies, developmentally appropriate curriculum models for young children, teacher developmental levels and teacher in-service training.

Implementation Strategies

Before considering any implementation strategies, it is of vital importance to first look at those factors that influence the success of that implementation. According to Fullan and Park (1981, pp. 23-24), "it is a process of learning and resocialization over a period of time involving people and relations among people in order to alter practices. Socialization requires interaction and support. Change in practice may also be thought of as a process of learning in which adults are the chief learners; all the main principles derived from the knowledge about socialization or learning theory apply." It is, therefore critical to develop a plan that not only looks at the learning style of the adult but also focuses on the inter-personal relationships of individuals employed together.

According to Fullan and Park, there are ten factors

that must be considered when implementing change in curriculum models.

1. The whole implementation cycle be considered as a process, not as an event. In other words, it is a gradual process that requires time and a continuum along which change may occur.
2. Any innovative "new" proposals that require implementation, will themselves will be further adapted, modified and developed as they are put into use.
3. It is the individuals who effect changes. However, it is also the same individuals who will themselves be changed as a direct result of the experience. It is a continuous cycle, as change occurs, there is a corresponding change within all the individuals involved.
4. The whole process of change must be clarified. Individuals involved, must clearly understand what the required changes are, and, be in a position to be able to implement these changes.
5. A support system must be established. Individuals need to be able to rely on resources and assistance of other professionals to avoid frustrations and to continue to remain on task.
6. Individual obstacles that may impede the implementation process must be closely scrutinized.
7. All plans must consider the following features;

a) the strategies as listed in one to ten.

b) the teaching approaches, available materials and the thinking styles of the individuals involved.

c) the data gathering and monitoring to assess any progress made.

8. Individuals must develop their own plan for implementation. Plans of action developed by one person may work very well for that individual, but may not work at all for another. It is therefore, important not to force a plan of action upon another individual.

9. It is impossible to effect change at one hundred percent. It is more important to note, that change is occurring and that one hundred percent change may not always be totally desirable. It is doubtful that a change of such magnitude is even possible when one considers the individuals and circumstances involved.

10. The goal of the whole process is not to look at individual factors that need to be implemented, but rather, to look at the whole process that is to be established. Once the appropriate process has become established, the whole implementation procedures will become much easier.

Further, ten factors that influence the implementation have been identified along with their

possible solutions, see Appendix H. Any successful implementation plan must consider these factors and principles. Any process must have a plan of action that identifies and incorporates those factors and principles that will allow for a greater success rate.

Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum Models for Young Children

Curriculum models are varied and plentiful. However, when dealing with curriculum models for young children, there seems to be agreement among the experts that young children learn best when they are allowed to;

explore and play
involve their senses
manipulate real objects
work together with adults and children
make meaningful plans and decisions
see the results of their actions
build upon what they already know.

(Young Children, 1984, pp. 20)

NAEYC issued a position statement in 1986, which identified developmentally appropriate practices in early childhood education programs. Included in this publication are guidelines for curriculum development for different age groups (infant and toddlers; three-,four-, and five-year-olds and six-,seven and eight-year olds), adult-child interactions and developmental evaluation of young children. The position statements are very well

researched. Research and references include; developmental theories, a variety of possible teaching strategies and curriculum models, physical development in early childhood, the aesthetic development of young children, motivational factors, parent-teacher relationships, teacher qualification and staffing and assessment of children. A summary is presented to the practitioners, that allows them to identify clearly what both appropriate and inappropriate practices are in the teaching of young children.

Schweinhart (1987), summarizes the importance of child-directed activities by looking at the support this kind of model receives within our society. He compares four current curriculum models, see Table 5. He concludes that, although the variety of early childhood curriculum models certainly 'enriches' the field of early childhood education, the issues about how young children are taught and ought to be taught need to be resolved.

Hohmann, Banet and Weikart (1979), have developed a manual for early childhood educators that clearly identifies adult roles, curriculum, children's developmental levels and learning characteristics and procedures on how to set up an appropriate environment to enhance child-directed activities.

The curriculum model that the Ministry of Education of Ontario has prescribed, emphasizes a child-directed

Table 5

Developmental Issues & Selected Early Childhood Curricula

Issue	Diagnostic Prescriptive	Direct Instruction	High Scope	Montessori
Emphasis	learning	learning	maturation & learning	maturation & learning
Child-initiated activities	some	no	yes	yes
Developmentally appropriate activities	usually	usually	yes	yes
Open ended activities	some	no	yes	some
Teacher role	authoritarian	authoritarian	democratic	democratic
Interaction among children	some	no	yes	some

Schweinhart (1987, pp. 4)

program. Individual boards of education have implemented more child-directed programs within their junior kindergarten programs. Each of these boards have developed a curriculum model for their teachers that clearly identifies the requirements of a child-directed program. Adcock and Segal (1983), have published a curriculum model that is based on the child's play activities. Different play activities are clearly described, material resources are listed and the value of each of the activity to the child is indicated. Emphasis is placed on the need of the curriculum to enhance cooperation between children, adults and adult-children relationships.

Each of these curriculum models have strong similarities. Each emphasizes the need of teachers to develop programs that allow children the freedom to explore their environments. Each emphasizes the need for the program to reflect best how young children learn. It is therefore, evident that a number of appropriate models do exist that encourage practitioners to increase the amount of child-directedness of their own particular model.

Numerous publications exist that guide the reader into particular types of child directed activities. Thus choices are available to allow practitioners to gradually move toward a more child directed program by concentrating on specific areas of interest. Some examples are;

1. Griffin (1983), describes how dramatic play might be encouraged.
2. Rich (1985), describes activities that can be developed to enhance children's creative writing skills.
3. Stone (1987), discusses the concept of early childhood math and the necessity to allow children to manipulate concrete materials so that a better understanding of number concepts may be developed.

Teacher Developmental Levels

The success of any implementation process involves individuals. Each individual will bring to this process his or her own particular starting point and particular bias. It is important to consider the individuals involved in the process. When considering any educational change, teacher awareness of the projected change and guidance to the teacher to accomplish that change, must be considered. A provincial review report on primary education in Ontario states, "A strong need was expressed for professional development activities, curriculum materials, and human resources to help principals and teachers develop understanding and skills for creating positive and productive classroom programs for the youngest children in school." (1983, pp. 13)

Just as children deserve the right to develop at their own pace in an environment that allows them to make

decisions and solve problems, that right must also be extended to adults. Katz (1972), has identified four developmental stages of teachers: Stage I, Survival; Stage II, Consolidation; Stage III, Renewal; and Stage IV Maturity. Each stage also has corresponding training needs; Stage I - support and technical assistance occurring on location.

Stage II - onsite assistance, accessibility of consultant and specialist and opportunities to discuss and gather advice from colleagues.

Stage III - visitations to model programs, attending conferences, joining professional organizations and reading a variety of journals magazines or books.

Stage IV - involvement in further education, i.e. courses, seminars or other degrees, attending conferences, reading journals magazines and books and become actively involved in developing and monitoring new programs.

Further, the stages are linked to number of years of teacher experience. A maximum of five years is suggested to reach the last stage, maturity.

Teacher In-Service Training

Serious consideration then, must be paid to in-service training for teachers. A consensus of teacher responses, as outlined in the provincial review report (1983), indicates that most teachers feel that

professional development days as they exist, were too general in nature and did not deal with practical matters. Teachers indicated that ongoing in-service was needed with emphasis on practical sessions that incorporate teaching techniques that could be utilized across the curriculum. Fullan and Connelly (1987), reinforce this point.

> The ultimate question is not whether theory and practice are blended in some sort of abstract procedural fashion in a program for teachers, but that teachers and teachers-in-training experience the worlds of theory and practice in an interconnected way.
>
> (pp. 47)

Fullan and Connelly further state that teachers are needed who are "reflective, critical and inquiring". These teachers need to continue to "study, refine and reflect" upon their skill as teachers throughout their career. Therefore, continued professional development to present new concepts and new ideas is an essential factor in the growth toward greater professionalism of teachers.

Description of Selected Solutions

Implementation Strategies

When considering any change, it is important to look at the process of change and also those factors which might influence the desired outcome. Fullan and Connolly

(1984), identify implementation as a process with clearly defined steps. In an effort to move the early childhood community toward more child-directed programs four major steps were identified. Each of these steps was also broken down into further, smaller steps.

1. Creating Public Awareness

To create more public awareness of the need for more child-directed programs, three steps were implemented. First, certain practicum locations had expressed a desire to have their particular center move toward a more child-directed approach. Meetings with these particular groups to confirm their intentions and to look at possible strategies for implementation were arranged.

Secondly, advertising through the College Calendar and through individual flyers sent to all practicum locations within the area, served to stimulate interest and motivation for the practitioners to become involved in a course to enhance the level of child-directed activities within individual practicum locations.

It was also felt, that by offering a formalized course through the Community College, more interest would be sparked because the practitioners would receive a credit from the College for their efforts. This could well enhance future job opportunities for the participants. A further advantage to offering the course through the College, was that the cost of handouts, audio-

visual materials and physical space would be covered more cheaply.

Thirdly, by applying for a grant to receive funding for this course, two advantages were identified. The licensing body for early childhood education programs within Ontario would, by granting the proposal, be sanctioning the proposed program. Further, practitioners already in a very low income bracket, would have an extra incentive to participate, as cost would not be a factor.

2. Teacher Developmental Levels

It was anticipated that most of the interest for this activity would come from experienced practitioners in the field. According to Katz (1972), teachers reach the stage of maturity within five years of practical experiences. Individuals in this area who had expressed a desire to move toward more child-directed activities in the past, all have had a minimum of five years of experience. Katz identified strategies for such a group of individuals, to be further training through formalized programs, such as courses or seminars, with a lot of emphasis on resource readings. Therefore, offering a course to help the practitioner move toward more child-directed activities would seem to be a logical route to follow.

Since it was anticipated that not all individuals, irrespective of experience, would be at a same starting point in the whole process, strategies had to be developed that would allow individuals to start at, and proceed,

at their own rate. The nature of the course was centered around an adult-centered learning experience. Adults were challenged to make decisions about activities they wished to become a part of, the degree of child-directedness they could personally accept within their programs and the time and energy they might be prepared to give to an implementation process within their settings.

In effect, adults were taught in a manner that the children they teach, ought to be taught in. This had a two-folded advantage. First, appropriate methods could be directly modelled and second, adults were able to experience to some degree, similar activities and feelings of success that children experience in child-directed programs.

The needs of the individual practicum locations were reflected in the course structure in several ways. Practitioners were encouraged to apply the various components as presented in the course outline, see Appendix A, to suit their particular needs. An attempt was made to allow practitioners to participate in discussion periods that evolved around common concerns and perceived obstacles.

Each participant group was also responsible for planning a course of action that suited the particular needs of that group. Practitioners were encouraged to look at themselves and at their particular setting to try

to identify those activities they should change, or perhaps more importantly, those activities they felt most comfortable in changing.

Since change cannot proceed from a totally teacher-directed program to a totally child-directed program, individuals had to be allowed to make choices and progress through any changes deemed necessary, at their own rate.

Thus, individuals who were more comfortable with circle-type of activities could chose to move to more child-directed activities within that particular activity. Individuals that utilized a more activity centered approach and offered more free choices to children, could choose to look at these components.

3. Strategies to Present Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum Models

Developmentally appropriate curriculum models need to take the individual learner into account. Individuals need to become active participants within the educational process. Active participation involves making decisions and choices, working together in groups, manipulation of real objects, ideas and events and building upon past experiences and knowledge.

Modelling of developmentally appropriate curriculum
- ls was done in two ways. First, the actual class
onment was changed and adapted weekly to meet the
ng course objectives. Emphasis was on practical
n experiences. Participant input was encouraged

both in small and large group discussions. Participants also received an extensive list of resource materials. These were identified in detail within each section of the course outline.

Second, opportunities were presented to view child-directed programs both through audio-visual materials and through arrangements for onsite visitations to some child-directed programs within the immediate area. Participants also had opportunities to discuss points of child-directed philosophy with practitioners of child-directed programs.

Thus, it was hoped that students would become more aware of different types of curriculum models and different techniques and ways to implement specific areas of child-directed activities.

4. Establishment of Support Strategies

In order to establish support systems for the future, to continue to offer encouragement and help as needed to the practitioners, the following support strategies were considered. Practitioners were asked to fill in a questionnaire, see Appendix I, to indicate the type of support structures they were interested in and would like to participate in.

Support services were developed to help the practitioner with parent populations and boards of directors. Evening workshops were held to increase awareness of the advantages of more child-directed practices to the children enrolled in the different

programs. The same principles were utilized for these workshops as were utilized for the practitioners' course. Practitioners advertised these workshops to their parents and board of directors on an individual center basis.

Continued support and encouragement depended on individual responses of the practitioner. Some of these possible support strategies were outlined in Appendix I. Practitioners were asked to fill out the questionnaire and add any areas of particular interest.

Report of Action Taken

The first step taken in the implementation process was to inform the ECE faculty of the proposed project. Information was shared informally through verbal discussions and in writing by passing on pertinent information such as the proposal, course outlines and research literature to faculty members. This was an ongoing process throughout the duration of the project.

Meetings with practitioners who had desired to participate in the project were set up. On the basis of input gained from these initial meetings, course components, ie. course content, course length and time and resource materials, were developed. Additionally, evaluation of the degree of child-directed activities of each individual practicum location was conducted and agreed upon. Results are tabulated under the Problem Documentation section.

The grant proposal to Community and Social Services

to defray participant cost and to enhance the professional status of the practitioners, see Appendix C, was developed and submitted.

The course was advertised through the college calendar, which is published in the local newspapers within the area prior to the start of a new semester. Additionally, flyers were also sent to individual practicum locations to reinforce the advertisement within the college calendar.

During registration, it became evident, that there was a much greater interest in the proposed course than was initially anticipated. The anticipated number of interested participants was from twelve to eighteen. Fifty-one individuals registered. Instead of the one night a week, that the course was scheduled to run, course nights were extended to three nights a week. It was further necessary to contact potential participants individually, to insure that every practicum location had all their staff enrolled on the same night and that all individuals wishing to participate could do so.

A great deal of time and effort was spent on the preparation of resource materials and resource hand-outs. It was vital, to set up an environment that encouraged the adults to be able to progress at their own rate, to be challenged to make decisions, and to have opportunities to interact with each other.

Participants in the course came from a wide variety

of backgrounds and experiences. Participants fell into one of the following groups; parents, teacher assistants, adult supervisors, elementary primary school teachers, early childhood educators, private home day care providers, resource center personnel and early childhood education students. Educational backgrounds ranged from high school graduates to post-graduate university programs or college certification programs. Background experiences were too varied to discuss in detail, but ranged from no work experiences to twenty-five years work experiences.

Implementation of the course, Child-Directed/Child-Initiated Activities occurred over a six week period, three evenings a week from Monday to Wednesday, from seven to ten o'clock each night. Room changes along with appropriate resources and materials were implemented each course night. Evening classes were broken down into the three components; introduction, active participation and discussions and conclusions.

During the introduction period, participants were given a general overview of the class, objectives were discussed and participant choices of particular activities were made.

During the active participation period, participants had opportunities to gain hands on experiences through actual manipulation of materials, viewing of films and videos, reading of a variety of resource materials, discussing points of interest informally with each other

and faculty or in more structured group settings, questioning faculty, guest speakers and other participants for further clarification or more in-depth insight, creating materials such as charts and floor plans and preparing a summary to present to the whole group about their participation for the evening.

During the conclusion period, individuals or groups of individuals presented their summaries to the total group. A discussion period followed to clarify points, raise new issues, expand upon points made and to try bring together the evening's activities. Any written summaries were collected. The summaries of all three class nights were combined, edited and duplicated. These summaries were then distributed in subsequent classes.

The faculty role during the evening sessions was that of a facilitator, to set-up the appropriate learning environment, to provide the appropriate learning materials and resources, to guide discussions, answer questions, incorporate suggestions or new directions to subsequent sessions, and to elaborate, enhance and clarify points of interest for participants.

Two parent and board of director's workshops were implemented. One of these workshops was a combined workshop. Some of the interested parents who participated were also board members. The second workshop included only parents. The value of play was only one of the items on the agenda. Workshops were advertised by posters,

flyers and the utilization of free advertisement space such as the local radio and television stations and weekly local newspapers. Each interested practicum location posted information on their parent boards and sent home the flyers. The total participation for the two workshops was twenty-two and twenty respectively.

Ongoing faculty support occurred over a three month period at the practitioners requests. This support ranged from requests for visitation to help with onsite problem solving, requests for additional resource materials, requests for workshops to make learning materials, requests to address staff meetings and requests for information on materials and resources for parent groups along with copies of handouts previously developed for parent workshops.

Information from the time-lapse questionnaire to gage the increase of child-directed activities within individual programs, was gathered verbally either by telephone or by an interview. None of the questionnaires had been returned by mail.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

1. Attempts to Create More Public Awareness

The grant proposal presented to Community and Social Services was accepted. Approval was obtained for the cost of the course but not for the text.

2. Course Evaluation

Evaluation of the course was done in three ways, through a participant rating scale, a participant questionnaire of possible support strategies and a participant time-lapse questionnaire.

The participant rating scale, see Appendix D, was analyzed in several ways, see Figure 2. The total number of responses to choice categories, 1 to 5, were calculated for items 1 to 15 in different ways, in order to measure different dimensions of the evaluation. The different dimensions measured were, the total number of responses per choice category, the perceived learning of the participants, the level of teacher instruction, the degree of student interactions and the appropriateness of the learning materials. Each dimension was calculated and recorded as follows. Totals for all items were calculated in series A. Choice categories for items 1 to 4 were calculated in series B, for items 6 to 10 in series C, for items 5, and 11 to 13 in series D, and for items 14 and 15

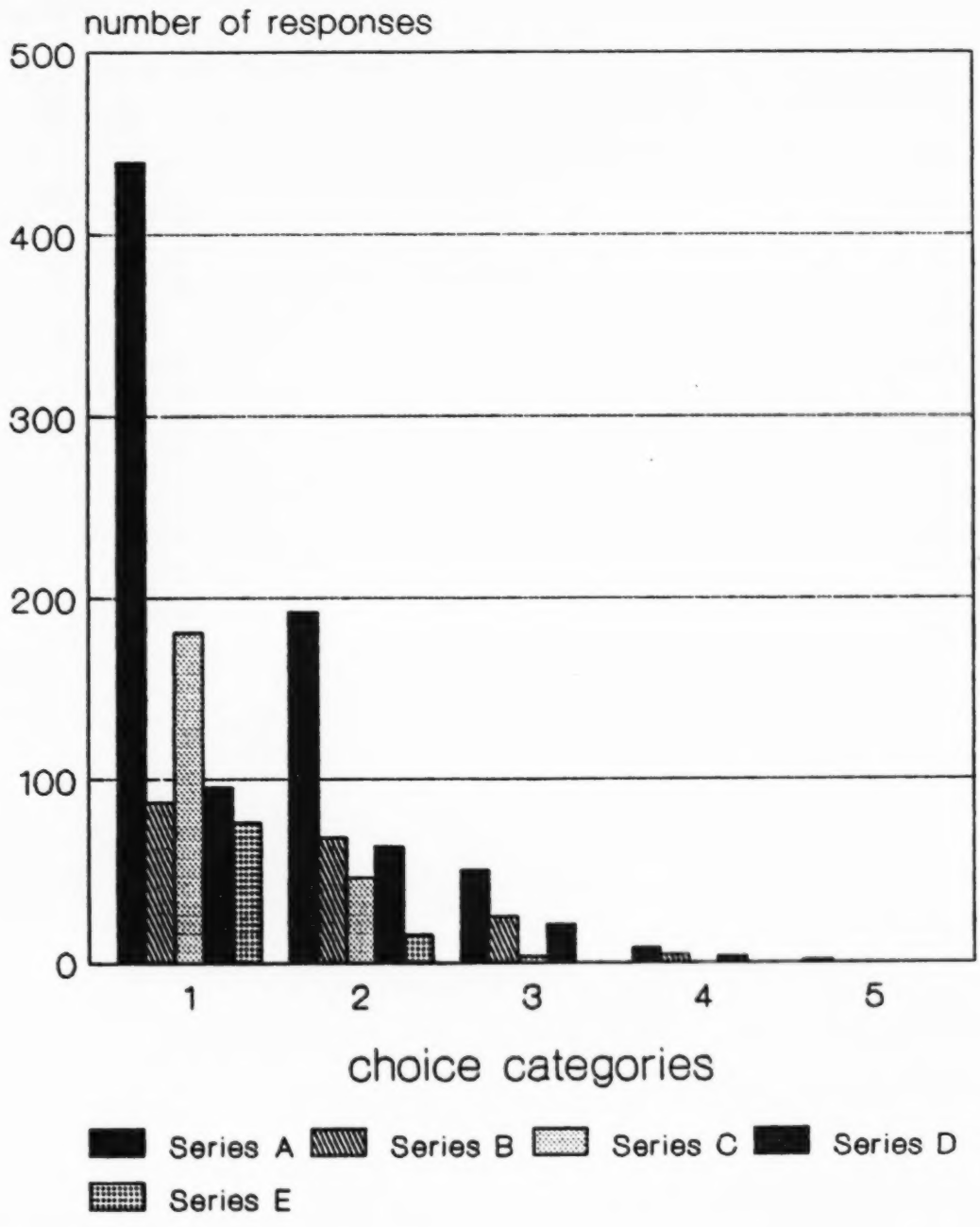

Figure 2 -Course Rating Scale

in series E.

Additionally, percentage scores were calculated for the above dimensions in the following way. Raw scores, see Appendix J, were totalled for each choice category, from 1 to 5, and for all items, 1 to 15 of the questionnaire. The total number of possible responses for all items answered was tabulated. Raw scores per choice category were divided by the total number of responses and multiplied by one hundred. Similarly, percentages were calculated for the rest of the dimensions listed above, see Table 6.

Twenty-eight participants included comments at the end of their evaluation scale. These comments could be grouped together in the following categories; enjoyment of the course, better prepared to articulate principles concerning child-directed activities, strengthened own belief, changed opinion, stimulated thinking, excellent resource materials, motivated to implement new ideas, enjoyed diversity of group and discussions, desired follow-up course, felt more time would have been desirable and expressed confusion about expectations for the individual during different course nights. Responses ranged from two responses to eighteen responses, with a median of five comments. High and low rates of response were for the first and last categories, stated above.

Responses to items on the support group and time-lapse questionnaires, were summarized in Tables 7, 8 and 9

Table 6

Percentage Calculation Per Dimension Measured for Course

Dimension Measured	Percentages Per Choice Category				
	1	2	3	4	5
total number of responses	63.6	27.8	7.3	1.2	0.1
perceived learning	47.3	37.0	13.6	2.1	0.0
teacher instruction	78.7	20.0	1.3	0.0	0.0
student interactions	52.2	34.6	11.5	1.7	0.0
learning materials	83.5	16.5	0.0	0.0	0.0

Table 7

Summary of Answers to Possible Support Strategies

Questionnaire - Appendix J

Category	No. of Responses
1. establishment of a support group how often?	30 1 per month
2. faculty support on location -spontaneous at practicum request -at regularly scheduled times -another formal course	 22 21 18
3. need for parent/board workshop -practicum location help facilitate -location -at the college - within practicum location -format - both groups together - both groups separate	28 16 9 17 9 11
4. establishment of a network to share resources/materials	24
5. other suggestions -offering an in-service to primary elementary school teachers	1

Table 8

Summary of Answers to Time-Lapse Questionnaire -

Questions 1 and 2, Appendix H

Category	Possible Responses
-degree of change as a result of course	-greater awareness of needs of child -greater awareness of how to act as a facilitator -increase of child-directed activities -giving children more choices -increased number of interest centers -enhancement of personal interactions with children -enhancement of child-directed philosophy already implemented -providing resources to parents about child-directed activities -more attention to setting up the environment
-area of implementation that was most successful and why?	-realization that the program is more child-directed - change in children's self esteem more positive -creative activities, free play and outdoor play - tended to be more child-directed already -communication with children - needed least amount of alteration -center activities - more comfortable with this activity
-area of implementation that was most difficult and why?	-housekeeping area - hard to change -clean - up - when do you allow materials out of the area, how long should materials be kept up? -children's display - looks messy -circle time - very structured activity, should children have a choice? -finding new materials to keep interest -art - difficulty in getting away from product oriented concept

Table 9

Summary of Responses to Time-Lapse Questionnaire

Questions 3 - 6, Appendix H

Category	Possible Responses
-support services of most use	-individual consultation with faculty -hand-outs -mainly course itself -visitation and brainstorming with faculty
-was rating scale used again?	-was not used a second time -most participants intend to use again in the future
-how helpful were course materials and resources and discussions	-role playing - helped anticipate parent discussions/questions -resource readings - helped set up activities -shared discussions with other individuals in other locations - helped establish communication network after course was over -principles of arranging environments actual floor plan - helped make room changes easier -looking at learning materials critically - helped in choice of materials
-suggestions	-specific center set-up -add practical material making portion to course -visitations as a group to centers using this philosophy

3. Evaluation of Parent/Board of Directors' Workshops

The two parent and board of director's workshops were evaluated by two participant rating scales, see Figures 3 and 4. Evaluation analysis was carried out in a similar manner to the course rating scale, described previously. The total number of responses to choice categories 1 to 5 are shown in series A of both Figures 3 and 4. The level of teacher instruction, (items 1 and 2 in Appendix E and items 1, 2 and 6 in Appendix F) and the perceived learning of the participants, (items 3, 4 and 5 on both scales), are recorded in series B and C respectively. Participant judgement about the value of the workshop experience, (items 6, 7 and 8 in Appendix F) is recorded in series D of Figure 3.

Percentage scores were also tabulated. These were calculated similarly to the percentage scores of the course rating scale, described previously, see Tables 10 and 11.

Discrepancies on percentage scores were found because two practitioners did not respond to all items on the scale and in one case an item was answered twice. However, the discrepancy range from 0.2% to 0.5%. It was felt that these discrepancies were not significant to the final results.

Comments made by the participants of both workshops were very positive. Comments generally related to enjoyment of the evening, expressed interest in future

Table 10

Percentage Calculation Per Dimension Measured

Parent/Board of Director's Workshop

Dimensions Measured	Percentages Per Choice Category				
	1	2	3	4	5
total number of responses	61.4	32.4	4.6	0.6	0.6
teacher instruction	63.6	31.8	4.6	0.0	0.0
perceived learning	54.6	39.4	4.5	0.0	0.0
judgement on values	66.7	25.8	4.5	1.5	1.5

Table 11

Percentage Calculation Per Dimension Measured

Parent Workshop

Dimensions Measured	Percentages Per Choice Category				
	1	2	3	4	5
total number of responses	63.3	33.3	3.3	0.0	0.0
teacher instruction	68.3	30.0	1.7	0.0	0.0
perceived learning	58.3	36.7	5.0	0.0	0.0

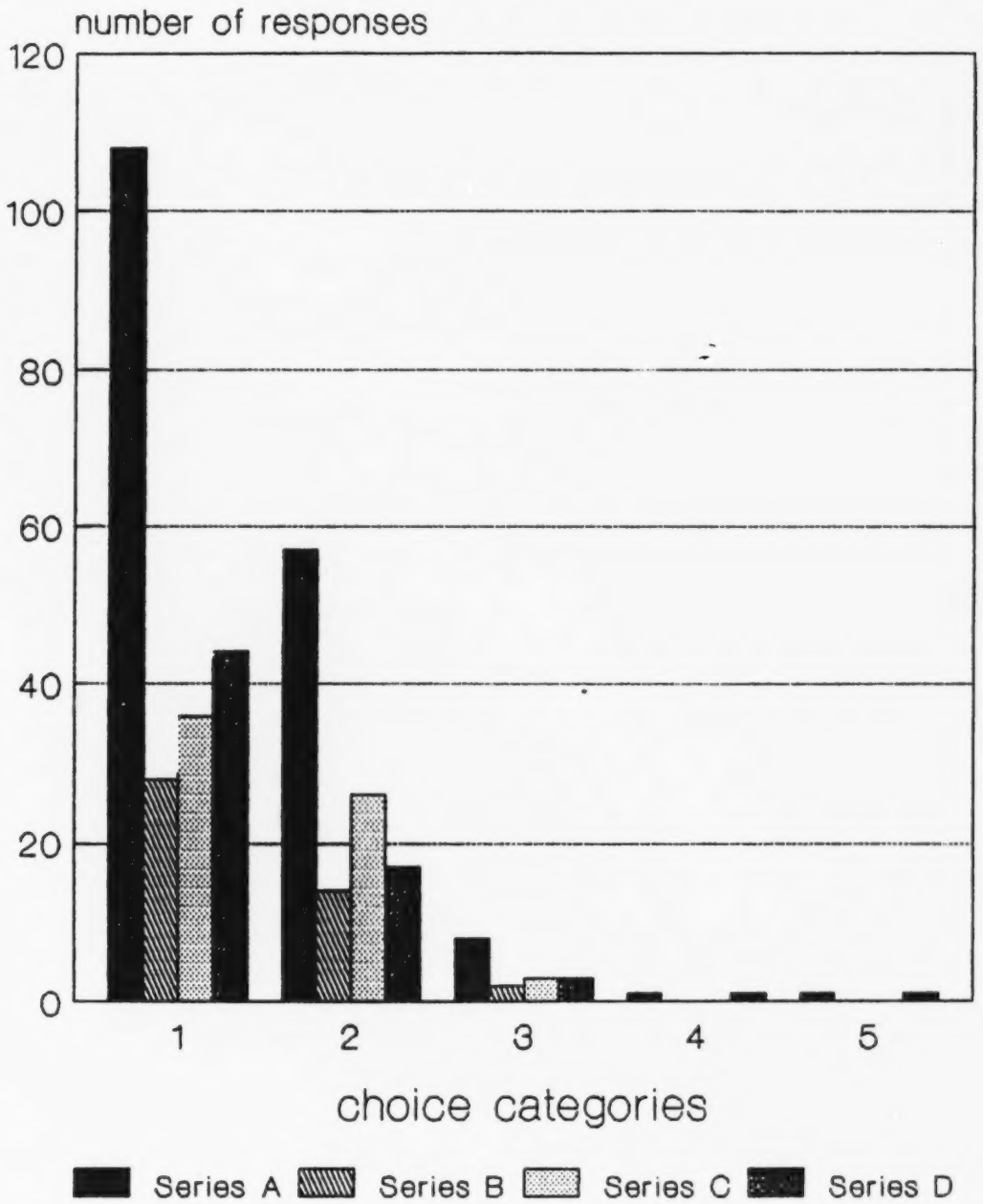

Figure 3 - Parent/Board of Director's Scale

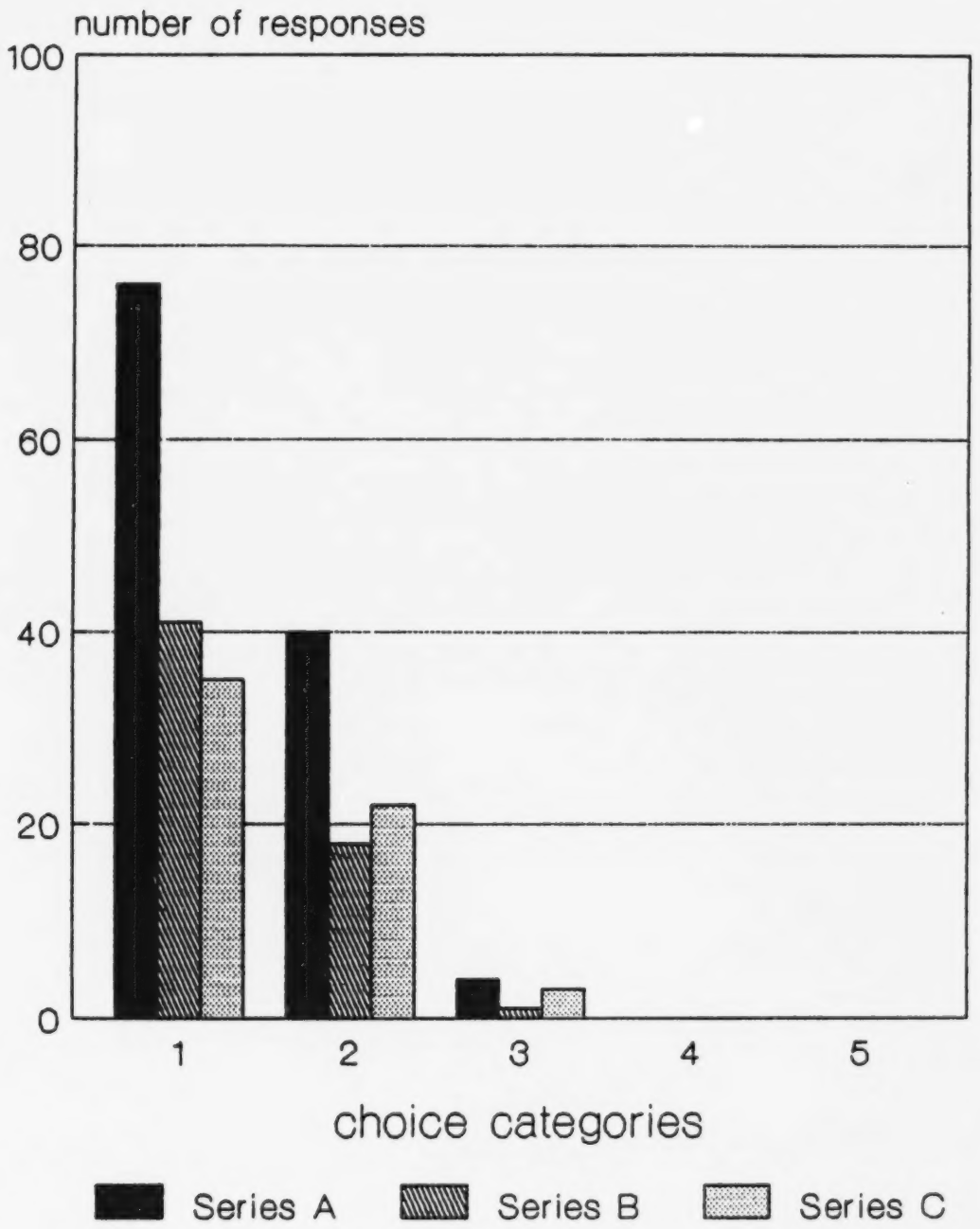

Figure 4 -Parent Scale

workshops and courses, motivation to learn more about this type of philosophy and desire to apply some of these principles to child-care. Only ten comments were filled in. All ten individuals had rated the items on the scale at either a 1 or 2 level.

Conclusions

Evaluation of Goals Set

1. Increase Community Awareness

a) Ministry Recognition

The acceptance of the grant for funding practitioners for further in-service training, had several major ramifications, that impacted directly on this project. First, there was an official recognition from Community and Social Services that in-service was both important and desirable. Second, there was the implication, that services given to young children can be enhanced and that quality issues are important. Third, there was an implied recognition, that the early childhood education community includes more than just practitioners working in licensed day care centers. Parents of young children, early childhood educators, teachers within the elementary board of education, adult supervisors, teacher assistants, private home day care providers, resource center personnel and early childhood education students were equally funded.

b) Positive Evaluation of Course/Workshops

The three rating scales used to evaluate the course and the workshops had five choice categories for participants to respond to. Categories ranged form a low of five to a high of one. For the purposes of analyzing results, scores of one or two were deemed successful at an

acceptable level, whereas scores of four and five indicated minimal impact. Analysis of the results of the responses are graphed in Figures 2 to 4. The following conclusions can be drawn from these results;
the total number of responses to items on the scales along all dimensions of measured behaviour, Series A to E,

i) most responses were in choice category one.

ii) the second highest response rate was in choice category two.

iii) response rates for choice categories 3 to 5 were consistently low.

iv) response rates for the level of teacher instructions, the perceived learning, student interactions and appropriateness of learning materials followed a similar pattern as described above.

v) response rates for the level of teacher instructions, were the only response rates scored at zero, in choice categories 4 and 5, on all rating scales used.

Response rates were also analyzed using percentage calculations, see Tables 6, 10 and 11. The following conclusions can be drawn from these results. Total responses to all choice categories, 1 to 5 showed the following;

i) a range of 61.4% to 63.6% for choice category 1, for parent and board of directors' rating scales.

ii) a range of 84.3% to 100% for responses to combined choice categories 1+2.

Comparisons of Combined Choice Categories Utilizing All Three Scales			
Dimension Measured	1+2	3+4+5	Rating Scale Used
total number of responses	91.4	8.6	Course
	93.8	5.8	Parent/Board
	99.3	3.3	Parent
perceived learning	84.3	15.7	Course
	94.0	4.5	Parent/Board
	95.0	5.0	Parent
teacher instruction	98.7	1.3	Course
	95.4	4.6	Parent/Board
	98.3	1.7	Parent
judgement of values	92.5	7.5	Parent/Board
student interactions	86.8	13.2	Course
learning materials	100.0		Course

Figure 5

iii) a range of 1.3 to 15.7% for responses to combined choice categories 3+4+5.

In conclusion, if traditional values are attached to the percent values, scores below 50% would indicate a failure to meet the goals and objectives, scores between 50% and 79% would indicate at least partial success and scores over 80% would indicate a high success rate. Since scores of 1 and 2 were deemed to be at acceptable levels, the high rate of participant response, to all categories, would seem to indicate that the first goal, to increase the awareness of child-directed activities within the early childhood education community has been met.

2. Increase Number of Child-Directed Activities Within Programs

The second goal, to increase the number of child-directed activities within practicum locations, also seems to have been met. Responses that measured participant learning ranged from 84.3% to 95%. The majority of the participants seemed to have gained greater insight into the principles of child-directed/child-initiated activities. Participants' comments on the course rating scale, would seem to indicate, that not only did they gain an awareness of the principles, but that some practitioners were actually starting to use their "new knowledge" within their practicum locations, see summary of comments on pp 45.

The time-lapse questionnaire gave a better indication

of the implementation of the more theoretical course components into practical applications within practicum locations. Twelve out sixteen centers that participated, responded by completing the time-lapse questionnaire. The summary of the responses, see Tables 8 and 9, indicated a variety of ways that more child-directed activities were being implemented.

3. Increased Opportunity For ECE Students to Train in More Appropriate Settings

Since there seems to be an increase of child-directed activities within practicum locations, it would follow that greater opportunities now exist for early childhood education students to participate within practicum locations that have a greater variety of child- directed activities, goal three. Informal support for this assumption was given by other faculty. Throughout the informal sharing sessions about this project, faculty made references to changes toward more child-directed activities in those practicum locations that had participated.

Evaluation of Objectives

1. Objective One - provide a six week evening course to early childhood educators through the community college

a) defining child-directed/child-initiated activities. 84.3% of the practitioners felt that they had a clearer understanding of these principles, see Figure 5. Comments such as, strengthening own belief, changed opinion, better

prepared to articulate principles, and motivated to implement new ideas which were made on the rating scale, reinforced the above point.

b) exploration of the advantages of this philosophy. The learning and resource materials provided for the duration of the course were rated very highly, a combined score (1 and 2) of 100%. Teacher instructional level also had a high response rate, a combined score of 98.7% It would seem that most practitioners were able to utilize the instructional milieu appropriately.

c) practitioner evaluation of the degree of child-directed activities within their own settings, see Appendix B. This met with only partial success, because all practitioners completed the activity, once.

Most participants indicated that they intended to use the scale again in the future, but had not done so yet.

Based on the informal observations of the college faculty, centers which were perceived to be more child-directed, rated themselves comparatively low on the scale. However, centers that were perceived to be more structured, rated themselves very high on the scale. It would seem that, as a greater understanding of the principles of child-directed activities evolve, practitioners became more critical.

Participants who were perceived to come from more structured programs and rated themselves very highly, exhibited some of the following characteristics. These

participants did not interact as much with other participants, had few suggestions or comments and often expressed confusion about what the instructor's expectations were. This was in direct contrast to other groups of participants. Calculation of a percent of these students as compared to the total enrollment of the group, is 13.7%. Participant responses to student interactions were not as high as other dimensions. 13.2% of the combined responses fell into the 3+4+5 category. It is conjectured that the lower ratings were given by the above mentioned participants. These participants may have needed more intervention at a lower training stage, as identified by Katz. It is also conjectured that this group perceived that the actual learning that had occurred for them, was lower. 15.7% of the responses fell into this category.

2. Objective Two - providing evening workshops to inform parents and board members about child-directed activities.

Both evening workshops seemed to be successful. Combined category ratings ranged from 93.8% to 99.3% and low ratings ranged from 1.7% to 5.8%. The parent workshop rated both categories 4 and 5 for all items at zero. It was particularly interesting to note, that participants from the parent/director workshop rated the overall value of the workshop higher than any of the other dimensions measured for. It was hoped, that this would translate into more support to the practitioners within those

settings.

3. Objective Three - involvement of community college faculty within practicum locations.

Few practicum locations requested onsite help. Only three locations chose this options. Most of the interactions were requests for additional resource materials or resource meetings. This occurred on an ongoing basis and has started to escalate. More and more requests for information for resource materials, evening workshops, day-time in-service at staff meetings and requests for additional courses and conferences have been noted. An additional bundle of resource materials/ resource readings has been sent out to 15 different locations, some of which were new locations. Additionally, there were sporadic telephone conferences to discuss specific problems or request specific information verbally. This objective seems to have been met.

Practitioners used the support service offered in a way that was most suitable to their perceived needs. These points seemed to be reinforced by the summary of comments by practitioners to the category of the most useful support service on the time-lapse questionnaire, see Table 9.

4. Objective 4 - application for a grant proposal

This objective was successfully met, as the proposal was accepted.

Some of the objectives were not met adequately. One

of the objectives was to provide opportunities to visit other practicum locations that were using a more child-directed philosophy. Although the possibility was set up to do this, few participants could actually visit these programs while they were in operation, because of a conflict in working hours. This objective had to be confined to viewing different practicum locations through the media of films and video and through contact with some of these practitioners through a panel discussion.

It was also very difficult to measure more long term effects of the course for the practitioners who were parents or students. Questionnaires were set up for practitioners, not for these other two populations.

Another objective that met with minimal success was the involvement of the practitioners in setting up and advertising the parent and board workshops. Practitioners seemed to lack the initiative to start the process. If materials, set-up times and advertisements were given to them, they were quite prepared to follow through. With the exception of two centers, this seemed to be the normal procedure.

6. Summary

In conclusion, the overall project seems to have been a success. The choice of offering a course to the practitioners and evening workshops to parents and boards of directors seems to be an appropriate route to follow to enhance the degree of child-directed programs within this

community. Part of the success seems to have been the nature of the instruction given. Making individuals responsible for their own learning, providing the participants with opportunities to explore new resources and materials, and, facilitation of discussions, seems to be a more effective way of reaching the adult learners. Practitioners responses, on the time-lapse questionnaire, as to how they felt that the course was of most use to them over a long term basis, seemed in agreement with the above view points.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made;

1. to provide further in-service programs, to continue to support and develop the understanding and implementation of child-directed activities. Practitioners themselves were aware of this need and indicated this both formally, on the Possible Support Strategies Questionnaire, see Table 7 and informally by the ongoing and increasing requests for information and resources to community college faculty.
2. to appoint other key individuals within the community to take on leadership roles in continuing the process of increasing the degree of child-directed activities within the early childhood community. Community response and the magnitude of the project, require the services of more than one individual.
3. to look more closely at the learning needs of adults in

in-service programs. Although the needs of most adults seemed to have been met, some individuals were still floundering with the concept of adult-directed learning. A more gradual transition needs to be developed to allow the participants to move along an adult continuum of learning more readily.

4. to develop better techniques to more adequately gage the degree of child-directed activities within programs. Perhaps a scale, such as the child-directed rating scale might be developed more fully and made more available for use.

5. to involve the whole early childhood community, to strive toward more child-directed programs for young children. The lack of initiative of practitioners to initiate workshops seems to indicate a lack of realization of the importance of this step. Further in-service needs to be provided to encourage and enhance this concept.

6. to develop and implement more in-service programs that include a broad spectrum of individuals working with young children. It is the broadening awareness, that the individuals involved with young children have a variety of different strengths to bring to the field of early childhood education that will ultimately bring about more acceptance of each other as professionals, and a greater spirit of working toward a common goal.

7. to insure that in-service programs take into account the diversity of the participant population to plan

programs that will suit the needs of all participants.

8. to apply for future funding for other quality issues through Community and Social Services.

9. to establish a leadership role in offering other post-diploma, in-service programs through the community college. Involvement of other faculty members and administrative personnel within this process is critical. Class structures; timing, length of courses, admission requirements, course content and sensitivity to the needs of practitioners should be looked at closely.

10. to develop a better means of collecting and distributing resource materials and readings. It is suggested that a library retrieval service should be set up that allows easy access to particular topics of interest, lists the variety of resources within the immediate area and offers a variety of means that practitioners might access this information, such as by telephone requests, computer printouts, mailing information or personal pick-up and browsing facilities. It is essential that such a service is up-dated regularly and that one person be responsible for the coordination of the service. A grant should be presented to Community and Social Services with this aim in mind.

11. to take a more careful look at the regular day-time early childhood education teacher training programs, to insure that these programs become more adult-centered and are more in line with the philosophy as expounded by the

early childhood education faculty.

12. to make the participants/practitioners more aware of teacher developmental levels and their comparable training levels, in order that individuals might have a clearer idea of what level they are at and what strategies they might use to move to the next level.

In summary, there has been a documented need for the early childhood education community, that individuals working with young children would like to be provided with more support services. It is important to recognize this need and to continue to act upon it in the future.

Dissemination

It would seem to be very important to have an implementation plan in mind when dealing with in-service programs. The implementation steps as presented by Fullan and Park, presented a smooth step by step procedure to follow. It is indeed critical to look at the total implementation cycle, not just at one aspect of it. If the implementation of this project were to be stopped at this point, the enthusiasm and momentum of the whole project could well be lost altogether. Therefore, careful planning should be done to insure that there is a more long-term plan that insures the continuation of a project once started.

Second, it is critical to allow adults to be able to progress at their own rates and at their own level. As

Fullen and Park state, it is the individuals that effect change. One cannot impose a system on individuals. Each individual must be able to develop a system that both works for and is agreeable to that individual. Thus, the implementation cycle can proceed step by step, but at differential rates and in different ways. This reinforces the four training steps developed by Katz, for teacher in-service programs.

The literature concerning more developmentally appropriate practices was a useful tool to help move along the implementation process. Articles, books and other readings reinforced practical experiences and discussions in class. Individuals became more aware of the needs of young children. Over and over statements were made such as, "The children enjoy this activity so much more. When I look at other types of learning that seems to be taken place, it seems so much broader than the narrow activity I had planned for." There was an overall delight, to discover, that these findings were commonplace within the research literature. There was also an increased awareness of some of the more practical aspects of the readings presented. Many of the specific questions and concerns were directly answered through the readings. Examples of these were specific interest center development, specific questions on room design and setting up of space and many more. This would confirm, that many of the participants were at level four in their training

needs and that the findings of Katz could be informally confirmed.

Teaching in a more adult-centered way, was definitely more interesting both for the participants and the lecturer. This again seems to reinforce the research findings that adults not only have a right, but also a need to be taught in more appropriate ways.

The initial problem statement was to increase the number of child-directed activities within the early childhood community. It is this author's opinion, that this can only be done through more appropriate strategies to teach the adult community. Adults need to experience appropriate models of education. Adults need to be treated as individuals. Hunt and Sullivan (1974), summarize this philosophy in the following statement,

> We believe that the person occupies the central role in any psychological theory and that educational planning should begin with the (learner) rather than with objectives or teaching methods.
>
> (pp. 31)

In summary, it is important to look at the individual learners, whether they are children or adults, and provide a learning environment that will enhance and allow their learning to proceed along a smooth and unending continuum.

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APPENDIX A

COURSE OUTLINE - CHILD-DIRECTED/CHILD INITIATED ACTIVITIES

COURSE OUTLINE - CHILD-DIRECTED/CHILD-INITIATED ACTIVITIES

GOAL

To provide practitioners opportunities through hands-on experiences, films, visitations, discussion groups and lectures to

1. explore a variety of ways that child-directed activities can be implemented within practical situations.
2. develop skills in evaluation techniques for the measurement of child-directed activities.
3. explore a variety of environmental designs suitable for setting up more child-directed activities within participants' settings.
4. develop skill in selecting appropriate equipment and materials to enhance child-directed activities.

OBJECTIVES

1. Practitioners will participate in an adult-centered learning experience within an environment that allows individuals to make choices.
2. Practitioners will evaluate their personal level of commitment to a more child-directed approach in teaching.
3. Practitioners will develop skill in evaluating the activities within their own setting as to the degree of child-directedness offered within that environment.
4. Practitioners will plan room/material/equipment changes to accommodate more child-directed activities.
5. Practitioners will have opportunities to discuss problems and concerns with other professionals who have had experiences with child-directed programs.
6. Opportunities will be provided to visit centers with more child-directed approaches.

Course Textbook

PLAY TOGETHER GROW TOGETHER by Don Adcock and Marilyn Segal

SESSION ONE

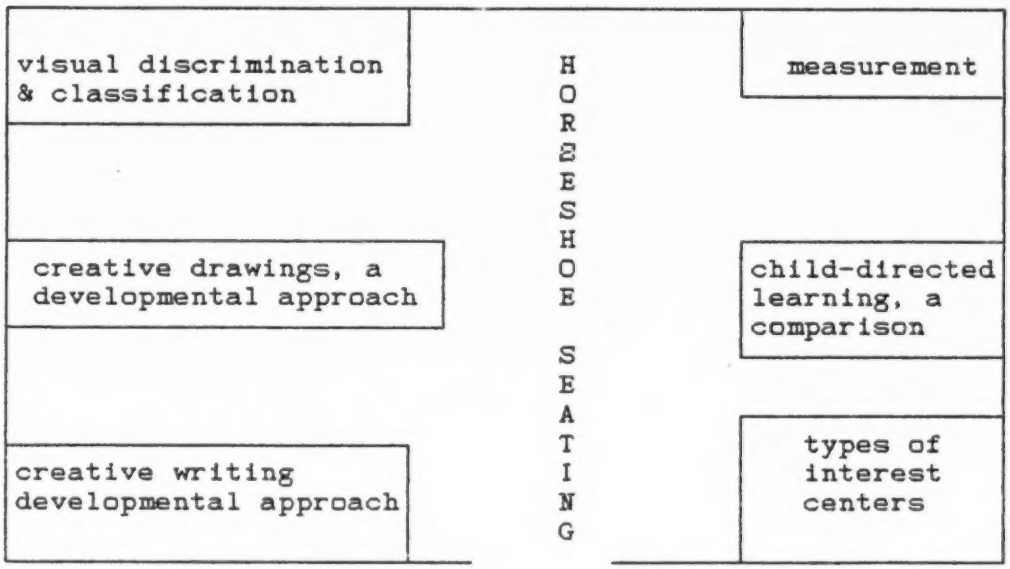
OBJECTIVE

Practitioners will participate in an adult-centered learning experience within an environment that allows individuals to make choices.

Method

1. Each individual may move to an area of choice.

2. The following areas may be utilized, as outlined on the plan.



3. The purpose of each interest area is as follows;

   a) Creative Writing, a developmental approach
   Participants will have opportunities to examine examples of children's writings, which are organized in a developmental hierarchy.
   Participants may sort and organize other examples according to the outline given.
   Readings:
   Transferring Images: Not Just Glued on the Paper
   The Writing Suitcase

   b) Creative Drawings, a developmental approach
   Participants will have opportunities to examine examples of children's drawings, which are arranged in a developmental hierarchy.

Participants may sort and organize other examples according to the outline given.
Readings: Talking With Young Children About Their Art

c) Visual Discrimination & Classification
Materials have been provided in this area, which allow the participants to explore a variety of ways that discrimination and classification skills could be enhanced with young children.
Readings: Theoretical Framework for Preschool Science Experience
Science and the Early Childhood Curriculum: One Thing Leads to Another

d) Measurement
Materials have been provided in this area, which allow the participants to explore ways in which the young child may start to manipulate and discover the concept of measurement and comparison.
Readings: Early Childhood Math: Make It Manipulative
Teach Mathematics With Children's Literature

e) Child-Directed Learning, A Comparison
Participants will examine the products of children's efforts, in order to determine the gains children have made by involvement of the particular projects. A variety of products of child-directed activities and teacher-directed activities are available for examination.
Readings: Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs

f) Types of Interest Centers
Three types of activity centers, the child-directed open ended, the child directed self-corrective and the teacher-directed follow-up center, are set up to give practitioners an opportunity to examine appropriate materials and provide some insight into the rational and use of each particular center.
Readings: Teaching With Less Talking: Learning Centers in the Kindergarten

Additional Readings: Appropriate Chapters in Play Together Grow Together
Ideas That Work With Young Children

4. Each activity area has a number of readings and handouts for clarification and resource materials for the future.

6. After examination of the materials of the activity centers chosen, participants are to discuss and respond to the questions as outlined (see Figure 1). Discussions will be in small groups. These groups will arise out of those individuals who had the same choices.

7. Results of the discussion will be shared with the total group.

8. The total group will discuss and summarize their experiences to try to identify what is meant by "child-directed" learning.

Figure One

In using each activity area, identify how you were able to do the following;

1. Explore and manipulate the materials.

2. Work together in a group.

3. Make meaningful plans and decisions.

4. Build upon what knowledge you already have.

5. See the results of your actions.

Session Two

Objective: Practitioners will gain a more complete understanding of the concept of child-directed activities through viewing of a film, readings and discussions.

Film: To Make A Difference

Readings: Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs
Sand: A Resource for the Language Arts
Creative Problem Solving Through Music Activities
Block Construction
Encouraging Dramatic Play in Early Childhood
The Art of Storytelling: How Do Children Learn It?

Session Three

Objective: Practitioners will develop skill in evaluating child-directed activities and apply that knowledge to their own setting.

1. Each individual will try to identify their own level of commitment to using child-directed activities within their program.

2. A rating scale of measuring the degree of child-directed activities within a setting will be discussed. Each individual will be asked to complete the scale within their own practicum location. Results will be discussed during the last session.

Session Four

Objective: Individuals will have opportunities to discuss problems and concerns about moving to a more child-directed program.

1. The following issues will be presented through a panel discussion. Each of the individuals within the program is presently in a classroom that uses a child-directed approach.
   a) Why individuals have moved to a more child-directed program.
   b) Difficulties each individual has encountered along the way, both personal and administrative.
   c) Evaluation of the child-directed program and its

benefits to the children involved.
d) Suggestions and advice to others wishing to move their program to a more child-directed orientation.

2. Small group discussion around the issues presented above.

Session Five

Objective: Discussions will center around the principles in setting up the environment to allow for child-directed activities.

1. Principles of setting up the learning environment will be presented.

2. Individuals will utilize floor plans of their own practicum locations to draft different ways to set up the environment to allow for the possibility of more child-directed activities.
Readings: How Can Playgrounds Be Improved?
Joining The Block and Housekeeping Areas

Session Six

Objective: Implementation strategies will be discussed.

1. Implementation strategies will be presented.
2. Discussion within practicum groups around issues in that particular location
3. A schedule of faculty involvement will be presented.
4. Evaluation of the course.
5. Follow up evaluation for the future will be discussed.

APPENDIX B

CHILD-DIRECTED RATING SCALE

The first section of the rating scale is a questionnaire.

The purpose of this questionnaire is as follows;

1. Each practitioner will be involved in thinking about and problem solving pertinent aspects about child-directed activities.

2. Practitioners will validate results by comparing their results to those of others within their practicum location or within a similar practicum situation.

3. Practitioners will discuss results in groups, to make sure, that all members of their group are in agreement over all points.

4. Through discussion, it is hoped that practitioners will realize that a scale utilizing simple yes/no responses is not suitable for measuring the amount of child-directed activity a program may have. Too many disagreements will occur.

5. The questionnaire is to serve as a validation for inter-rater reliability, before individuals utilize the rating scale itself.

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Is the room arranged in interest centers?

   Yes..... No.....

2. Are these interest centers available to children's use - During scheduled times only.....
   - For most of the school day.....
   - For the entire school day.....

3. Are children allowed to make choices about (Y/N)

   Centers they wish to use.....
   How to use the materials in each center.....
   How they will use the equipment.....
   Participation in group activities.....
   Initiation of new activities.....
   Who they will interact with.....
   How they will complete their task.....
   If task are to be completed.....

4. In any group activities are children given opportunities to

	(Y/N)
Plan the activity	.....
Make choices about the activity	.....
Make choices about the length of time they will participate	.....

5. Are materials/equipment provided to
   Encourage a wide variety of uses.....
   Be accessible to all children.....
   Encourage decision-making.....
   Encourage problem solving.....
   Encourage individual or small group participation.....

6. Are children encouraged to

Initiate activities	Y - N
Talk about their experiences to - peers	Y - N
- adults	Y - N

7. Are structured group times provided to encourage children to
   Listen to the adult present a topic.....
   Follow specific directions.....
   Sit in a specified manner.....
   Participate for a predetermined length.....
   Answer questions posed by the adult.....
   Participate according to instructions given....
   Allow expression of their ideas and thoughts...

INSTRUCTIONS for Child-Directed Rating Scale

There are six categories presented; gross motor activities, group activities, time tables, center activities, adult interactions and interactions with parents.

Categories are broken down into two main areas; structured and unstructured activities. Structured activities include time tables, gross motor and group activities.

Unstructured activities include center activities, adult interactions and interactions with parents.

For each of the categories, the participant is to choose the appropriate rating, from a scale of one to five. All aspects of the category must be present to be able to mark that category. Even if only one aspect is not present, the previous category must be circled.

Categories for GROUP ACTIVITY and CENTER ACTIVITY may be utilized separately for each identified activity in the classroom. Activity may be identified at the top of those pages.

Lastly, a graph may be filled in to more easily identify the level of child-directed activities reached within that setting.

STRUCTURED ACTIVITIES

GROSS MOTOR

1.

Group of children participate by following adult's directions. Space and equipment are limited. Participation is uniform. Time and schedule are predetermined.

2.

Group of children participate in a set pattern according to adult's directions. Space and equipment are set up to allow some individuals to participate while others wait their turn. Time and schedule are predetermined.

3.

Space and equipment are set up to allow children to make some choices. Arrangement and amount of equipment requires turn-taking. Choices are limited by adult's directions. Time and schedule are predetermined.

4.

Space and equipment are set up to allow children to make choices. Minimal waiting for a turn is required. Adult offers guidance and encouragement. Length of time is flexible. Activity is scheduled on a regular basis.

5.

Space and equipment are set up so that individual participation can occur at any time during child's day. Choices are available. Adult's offer guidance and encouragement.

GROUP ACTIVITY
Type of activity.....

1.

Group of children are required to sit in a specified way, on a particular spot. Required activity includes listening to the adult, answering questions when asked and responding physically when directed. Length of group activity is predetermined.

2.

Group of children are required to sit in a specified way, on a particular spot. Required activity includes listening to the adult, answering questions when asked and responding physically when required. Activities are planned to have a balance between physical and static activities. Length of group activity is predetermined.

3.

Group of children are free to sit as they wish. Participation between adult and children is shared. There is a balance between listening and responding activities. Some child initiated responses are encouraged. A limited number of materials are available for children to use. Children wait for their turn. Length of group activity is predetermined.

4.

Group of children are free to sit as they wish. Spontaneous responses are encouraged. Materials are available to whole group and used as directed by adult. Length of activity is determined by the interest and attention span of individuals in the group.

5.

Group of children choose to participate in activity. A variety of materials are presented to allow children maximum opportunities to manipulate and experiment. Spontaneous discussion is encouraged. Children make individual choices on how long they wish to participate.

Time Table

1.

All activities are precisely time-tabled. All routines are scheduled events. Time of all activities is predetermined and followed.

2.

All activities are precisely time-tabled. All routines are scheduled events. Time of all activities is predetermined and followed. Special events are planned occasionally. Schedules and times during special events become more flexible and depend on the nature of the activity.

3.

All activities are precisely time-tabled. Routines are more flexible and occur only when needed. Special events are more often scheduled. Timing and scheduling becomes more flexible and depends on the nature of the activity and the interest of the children.

4.

A general time table is available. Activities are scheduled within broad general time frames. Routines are not scheduled. Weekly events are identified Children's attention span and interest levels determine length of activities. Special activities are both planned and spontaneous.

5.

Time table identifies only weekly scheduled events such as scheduled visits to the library or gym. General activities are listed without specific time frames. All routines and activities are flexible and depend totally on children's interest levels and attention spans. Special activities are planned and spontaneous and depend on observed interest of the children.

UNSTRUCTURED ACTIVITIES

CENTER ACTIVITIES
Type of center.....

1.
Center contains a variety of activities and materials that teach, reinforce or enrich a skill or concept. Adult supervision is required. Children are required to participate for a specified time. Activity is to be completed.

2.
Center contains a variety of activities and materials that teach, reinforce or enrich a skill or concept. Adult supervision is required. Individual children are encouraged to participate but may choose not to. Time is predetermined. Activity is to be completed.

3.
Center contains a variety of activities and materials that teach, reinforce or enrich a skill or concept. Materials are chosen in such a way that a minimum of adult supervision is needed. Children are encouraged to participate but may choose not to. Time spent is flexible and depends on interest levels and attention span. Child is encouraged to complete the activity.

4.
Center contains a large variety of activities and materials that teach, reinforce or enrich a skill or concept. Materials are developmen--tally appropriate and can be used for a variety of purposes that require very little adult direction. Children are free to chose to participate and for how long. Completion of the activity is encouraged.

5.
Center contains a variety of activities and materials that teach, reinforce or enrich a skill or concept. Materials are developmentally appropriate, multi-purpose and self-exploratory. A variety of materials are presented for different age and interest levels of the children. Materials are changed regularly. Adult provide guidance as needed or requested. Children are free to participate. No restrictions are placed on time or completion.

ADULT INTERACTIONS

1.
Adults direct activities of children. Assistance is given totally, ie. hand-over-hand assistance, dressing child totally

2.
Adults direct activities of children. Assistance is provided as needed. Some encouragement is given to children to try by themselves first.

3.
Adults direct activities of the children. Children are encouraged to try to develop more independence to try activities by themselves.

4.
Adults encourage children to initiate activities. Emphasis is placed on developing independence and problem solving skills. Adult roles are to guide and encourage children to participate in activities of their choice.

5.
Emphasis is on the adult as the facilitator. Adults observe children to know when it is appropriate to interact and when it is not. Children are encouraged to make decisions, solve problems, and actively explore their environments.

INTERACTIONS WITH PARENTS

1.
Parents are encouraged to interact with staff at arrival and dismissal times. Regularly scheduled interviews are one or two times a year. Participation is encouraged during scheduled special activities. Information is shared by at least one progress report.

2.
Parents are encouraged to interact with staff at a set time during arrival and dismissal times. Parents are encouraged to attend regularly scheduled interviews each term. Participation is encouraged for any special events. Parents receive at least two progress reports and information is shared on a parent bulletin board.

3.
Time is set aside for staff to interact with parents during arrival and dismissal times. Periodic newsletters are sent home. Parents receive at least two progress reports a year, which are followed up by an interview. Parent bulletin boards are set up to share information with parents. Parents are encouraged to volunteer for special events.

4.
Parents are encouraged to interact with staff at any times convenient to both. Information sharing includes informal discussions, interviews, periodic news-letters, term progress reports and children's creative displays. Parents are invited to volunteer for a variety of scheduled events.

6.
Parent input and help within the program is encouraged by the staff. Parents are encouraged to participate as much as possible during their child's day, during program planning sessions and in making suggestions for improvements. Parents become working partners within their child's school experience. Reporting on progress is both informally and formally done on a regular basis.

CIRCLE THE SCORE FOR EACH AREA

GROSS MOTOR	1	2	3	4	5
GROUP _____	1	2	3	4	5
GROUP _____	1	2	3	4	5
GROUP _____	1	2	3	4	5
GROUP _____	1	2	3	4	5
TIMETABLE	1	2	3	4	5
CENTER _____	1	2	3	4	5
CENTER _____	1	2	3	4	5
CENTER _____	1	2	3	4	5
CENTER _____	1	2	3	4	5
CENTER _____	1	2	3	4	5
ADULT INTERACTION	1	2	3	4	5
INTERACTION WITH PARENTS	1	2	3	4	5

NAME _____

EVALUATOR _____

DATE(S) _____